CALFEX

Tactical Training with a Purpose

CAPTAIN E.J. NUSBAUM
CAPTAIN JOHN T. ROBINSON

The combined arms concept governs the way the U.S. Army is training to fight the AirLand Battle. It is discussed at great length during service school courses and in gameboard simulations. But before soldiers and small-unit leaders can get a real appreciation for combined arms and gain an ability to use the concept, they must be allowed to apply it in a realistic situation. The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry conducted a successful combined arms live fire exercise (CALFEX) at Fort Riley in 1982, and a summary of the battalion's experiences may provide a "how to do it" for other units.

This CALFEX focused on three rifle companies, each of which conducted a 48-hour exercise. The battalion conducted the entire exercise in five days, as shown in Table 1. Elements of the combat support company were attached to the company teams or otherwise supported their operations. Command and control was furnished by the battalion tactical operations center in the field, and support to each team was provided from the battalion trains. The CALFEX gave the battalion's soldiers and leaders alike an opportunity to see the effects of combined arms operations, and it also gave the leaders an opportunity to plan and control combined arms assets in a live fire exercise.

Organizing and coordinating the CALFEX was complex and demanding. In fact, the event was planned as a graduation exercise for which the units would have to train.

All the battalion assets were used, and the battalion coordinated with a large number of outside organizations. Battalion planners, for example, began their coordination with the air elements for close air support and attack helicopters 120 days before the scheduled event. The times and number of sorties, together with the types of desired ordnance for each sortie, were confirmed.

Coordinating a firing battery and the necessary ammunition was only one part of the field artillery support. The fire support team (FIST) for each company and the battalion fire support element (FSE) had to become fully involved in the planning phase of the exercise, and they also participated in the preliminary training before the actual exercise.

Before the exercise, too, combat engineers were used to prepare obstacles in the maneuver area. The materials the engineers needed had to be anticipated and obtained and the equipment requested. Like the artillerymen, the engineers were integrated into all pre-CALFEX training. Sup-

CALFEX Schedule

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
Co A	Tactical move Occupy TAA	Dry attack Live atk/def Delay Occupy TAA	Shakedown Tactical move Recovery		
Co B		Tactical move Occupy TAA	Dry attack Live atk/def Delay Occupy TAA	Shakedown Tactical move Recovery	
Co C			Tactical move Occupy TAA	Dry attack Live atk/def Delay Occupy TAA	Shakedown Recovery

Table 1

porting armor platoons also trained with their designated mechanized infantry companies during the pre-CALFEX period.

In addition to these combined arms elements, several post agencies were involved in the coordination process. Range control, for instance, played an important part in the planning, because range and training area requirements, including pre-training requirements, had to be arranged for and confirmed. Extensive range preparation was also required; the objective had to be prepared, hard targets emplaced, and range fans drawn and approved.

Class III and V supplies for all participating units also had to be coordinated during the planning phase. The coordination of Class V supplies was a key area. A large draw and turn-in had to be anticipated and scheduled by both the supply and transportation platoon and the ammunition supply point (ASP). Class V needs also had to be coordinated between all of the supporting units and the ASP (See Table 2).

The presence of controllers and

Ammunition Expended
(three company teams)

Type	Amount
5.56 Ball	19,640
7.62 Ball	9,648
.50 Cal API	11075
M85, .50 Cal	1405
81mm HE	150
4.2 HE	150
4.2 Illumination	60
4.2 WP	30
TOW	6
155 HE	414
155 WP	18
155 Smoke	18
105 HEAT/TPT	60
20mm Cannon	1,020
2.75-inch Rocket	60
40mm Practice	300
35mm Subcaliber	42

(Does not include USAF ordnance.)

Table 2

Sequence of Events

Time	Event	Task No.
Day 1		
0800	Prepare for Operations	3-I-1
	Receive Bn TF OPORD	3-I-2
	Prepare & Inspect Equipment	3-I-6
	Issue Team OPORD	3-V-1-1
1300	Conduct Tactical Roadmarch	3-V-1-3
	Operate Quartering Party	3-V-1-4
	Cross SP	3-V-1-6
	Maintain Security	3-V-1-7
	Operate Trail Party	3-V-1-8
1500	Occupy Assembly Area	3-I-1
	Prepare for Operations	3-I-2
	ARR	
Day2		
0001	Occupy Assembly Area	3-I-1
	Prepare for Operations	3-I-2
0900	Mortar/Artillery Preparation of Objective	3-V-2-5
	Conduct Attack (Dry Fire)	3-V-1 thru 11
0930	Team Attack, Cross LD	3-V-2-4, 5
	Move to Objective (Dry Fire)	7, 10, 11
1000	Mounted Assault of Objective	3-V-2-13
	Consolidate	3-V-2-16
	Reorganize	3-V-2-17
1045	AAR of Dry Fire	
1100	Test Fire of Weapons	
1145	Withdraw to Assembly Area	
1215	Preparation for Operations	3-I-1, 2, 6 3-V-1-1
1400	Same tasks as 0900-1045. The exercise will be conducted as a live-fire exercise.	
1630	AAR of Live-Fire Attack	
1645	Defend Battle Position	3-V-3-2
	Preparation of Battle Position	3-V-3-3
	React to Indirect Fire	3-V-3-5
	React to Direct Fire	3-V-3-6
	Enemy Probe, Attack	3-V-3-7
	Employ Supporting Fire	3-V-3-14
2100	Clear — Inspect all Weapons	
	Turn in Ammunition	
2130	AAR	
2200	Withdraw to Assembly Area	
Day 3		
0700	Preparation for Operations	3-I-1
	Inspection of Equipment (Final Shakedown)	3-I-6
1000	Conduct Tactical Roadmarch	3-V-1-3

Table 3

evaluators down to platoon level was critical to the success of the exercise. The evaluators provided immediate feedback in the form of after-action reviews, which were scheduled as training events during the exercise, as shown in Table 3.

The soldiers and leaders were given specific preliminary training in the skills they would need to execute the CALFEX. This preliminary training ensured that in the CALFEX itself the soldiers could apply acquired skills instead of being forced to learn and apply new skills at the same time.

Before the exercise itself, the soldiers were trained in the Soldier's Manual skills outlined in ARTEP 71-2 in the Individual/Collective Integration Matrix. The batallion placed special emphasis on individual and crew-served weapon proficiency.

Squad, platoon, and company ARTEP task training, which focused on the tasks selected for the CALFEX, was also conducted. Leader training emphasized the application of combined arms assets through the use of TEWTs, map exercises, and classroom training. The TEWTs were conducted on two levels. The first, conducted by the battalion commander, included the rifle company commanders, the armor company commander, the engineers, the U.S. Air Force forward air controller, and the Army air controllers. The second level of TEWTs, conducted by each rifle company commander with platoon and squad leaders from their companies and leaders from their attachments, consisted of multiple exercises. All of these TEWTs were conducted both on the ground and from the air. Dry runs of the CALFEX were conducted before the exercise and also as an event during the exercise itself.

The value of all this advance coordination, planning, and training became clear during the actual combined arms exercise. Each company team followed the sequence of events shown in Table 3, and the controllers evaluated the ARTEP tasks as the events progressed.

Safety was a key factor, and all safety officer requirements were met by the chain of command during the exercise. A series of well-defined phase lines were used both for safety and for realism. The crossing of phase lines determined when the tactical air support would start and stop, when the indirect fire would be shifted, and when weapons would be loaded. Thus, the maneuver elements did not encounter any dangerous fire. Only the enemy force was simulated, and the units in the exercise accepted all tactical limitations in exchange for the training value to be derived from them.

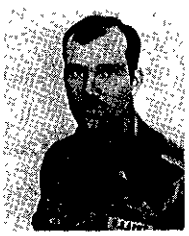
At the conclusion of each major phase of the operation, an immediate after-action review was conducted for the leaders and soldiers at all levels. These reviews were positive and were conducted in such a way as to maintain the momentum of the problem; no "administrative halts" were called for the purpose of conducting reviews.

LESSONS LEARNED

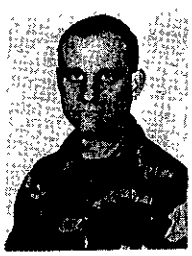
The CALFEX, as it was conducted by the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, proved to be a valuable exercise in terms of the amount of realistic training the soldiers and their leaders received. A number of valuable lessons were learned during the planning and execution of the exercise, and these lessons should be applied to all similar exercises:

- All agencies and assets from both the installation and the division must be properly coordinated and used to gain the full value from the many resources that must be commited to a CALFEX.
- The coordination of range construction and target emplacement must be centralized at division level.
- Qualified evaluators from outside a battalion would allow all of the battalion's soldiers to focus their full attention on their tactical assignments.
- Even more preliminary live-fire training would be helpful. (Ideally, squad and platoon live-fire exercises should be conducted before the CALFEX; they would help to instill into soldiers and leaders alike a greater degree of confidence and skill in their ability to handle weapons and systems in a live-fire situation.)

The battalion's CALFEX was expensive in terms of both manpower and material, but the training value derived from it made it well worth the cost. The chain of command of each company was clearly identified and validated. The soldiers gained an appreciation for the firepower available in a combined arms team, and the leaders enjoyed a rare opportunity to apply and control the key elements of a combined arms team in a realistic situation. This training experience clearly improved this battalion's ability to fight the AirLand Battle on the next battlefield.



Captain E. J. Nusbaum, when this article was prepared, was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, at Fort Riley. He is a 1979 *graduate of the* U.S. Military Academy and recently completed the Infantry Officer Advanced Course.



Captain John T. Robinson was also assigned to the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, during the CALFEX discussed in the article. A graduate of Southern Illinois University and Eastern Kentucky University, he recently completed the CAS³ course at Fort Leavenworth.